

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE**

**SUITE 2320 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301  
(202) 225-6371  
TTY: (202) 226-4410  
<http://www.house.gov/science/welcome.htm>**

July 20, 2005

Letters to the Editor  
The Hill Newspaper  
733 15<sup>th</sup> St, NW, Suite 1140  
Washington, DC 20005

To the Editor:

It's not surprising that The Hill editorial (July 20) on my dispute with Chairman Barton is so off-base since no one from The Hill bothered to call to get any information from us, and the author of the editorial does not seem to have bothered to read the letters that are at the heart of the dispute.

So let me explain the actual facts. First, this is not primarily a dispute about jurisdiction. That might have been clear from the line in my letter to Chairman Barton that reads, "This [i.e., jurisdiction] is in no way my central concern about your investigation[.]"

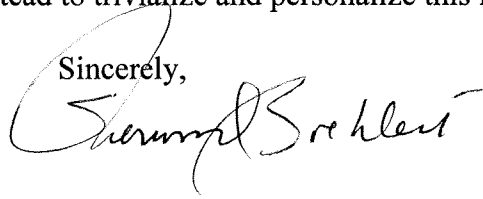
Second, in no way have I implied that the Energy and Commerce Committee has no interest in following the climate change debate. What I have said is that neither the Energy and Commerce Committee nor any other Committee should engage in the climate debate by attempting to intimidate legitimate scientists who are conducting research in a manner consistent with scientific norms.

What Congress ought to be doing is closely following the public debate among scientists, asking scientists public questions related to that public debate, and, when necessary, engage the National Academy of Sciences or other experts to help sort through scientific disputes. And, of course, Congress needs to draw conclusions about the policy implications of scientific information.

But instead of taking that approach, the Energy and Commerce Committee has embarked on an unprecedented path of launching an open-ended investigation against a scientist on one side of the debate and his sponsoring agency. This is not a remotely necessary step to get the information Congress needs to understand climate science disputes. It is a step that intimidates scientists, and could put Congress in the position of arbitrating highly technical scientific disputes that are in the process of being sorted out in the scientific literature. In this particular case, it's not clear how Congress is supposed to sort out detailed questions about computer models based on 15<sup>th</sup> Century tree rings.

I welcome any informed view on the serious debate I am having with Chairman Barton about the nature of Congress' interaction with the scientific community. It's unfortunate that The Hill chose instead to trivialize and personalize this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sherwood Boehlert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

SHERWOOD BOEHLERT  
Chairman